

HECB Legislative Issues: 2004 Session Report

Reflects final actions by Legislature and Governor

April 22, 2004

Issue	HECB Perspective	Legislative Outcome
Supplemental operating budget	The HECB supports expansion of higher education enrollments, including additional slots in “high-demand” fields where job opportunities are greatest.	The 2004 supplemental budget (HB 2459) includes funds for nearly 3,000 new full-time enrollments for 2004-05; larger Promise Scholarship grants; new research at the UW and WSU; and expansion of the Health Professional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program.
Supplemental capital budget	The HECB endorsed several capital proposals by the colleges and universities in December 2003.	The \$218 million supplemental capital budget (HB 2573) includes \$115 million for higher education and raises the biennial total for higher education to \$874 million. The budget includes \$31.6 million for a WSU academic center in Spokane, \$19.5 million for a new instructional building at Grays Harbor College, \$14.4 million to replace the welding and auto facility at Bellingham Technical College, and \$8.1 million to accelerate completion of Senior Hall at EWU.
High-demand enrollments	The HECB is administering a competitive high-demand grant program for the 2003-05 biennium that includes \$8.3 million to support more than 500 new enrollments in high-demand fields.	The supplemental budget includes \$3.6 million each for the HECB and SBCTC to expand existing grant programs in 2004-05. The new funds would support 324 new full-time enrollments in high-demand fields at the four-year institutions and 877 FTE at the two-year colleges. Governor Locke vetoed a provision to permit private four-year colleges to compete with the public universities for 2004-05 funds.
Promise Scholarship funding	HECB supports increasing Promise Scholarship grants to equal two years of full tuition at two-year colleges.	The supplemental budget contains \$2.3 million to increase the 2004-05 award from the current level of 43% of CTC tuition. The Governor vetoed a provision to reduce the income eligibility cutoff for 2004 high school graduates to 120% of median family income, preserving the current limit of 135%.

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2004 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education	The HECB interim plan calls for the state to increase the number of students who earn college degrees and to improve higher education's responsiveness to the state's economic needs.	The House of Representatives approved HCR 4416 to guide the HECB's development of the final strategic master plan, but the Senate failed to act on the resolution before the end of the regular session. The 2004 strategic master plan is scheduled to be completed this summer.
HECB role and responsibilities	The HECB collaborated with a legislative work group during the 2003 legislative interim to examine options to update and revise the board's statutory role and responsibilities.	The Legislature and Governor enacted HB 3103 , the first comprehensive revision of HECB authorizing statutes since the board was established in 1985. Among other changes, the bill establishes an advisory council to work with the board and creates a process to assess the need for additional programs and graduates in various academic fields and economic sectors.
HECB member confirmations	Board members Miguel Bocanegra, Jesus Hernandez and Sam Smith were up for confirmation in 2004.	The Senate Higher Education Committee recommended all three board members for confirmation, but the full Senate did not confirm any gubernatorial appointments to higher education boards.
Collaboration and communication among education organizations		Governor Locke vetoed two bills passed by the Legislature to promote collaboration among education groups. SB 5677 would have required annual meetings to promote a seamless system, and SB 6561 called for agency collaboration to create more dual-credit options for high school students. The Governor said both bills duplicated current laws or newly enacted legislation.
Performance contracts pilot project	The HECB interim strategic master plan endorses a pilot project under which the state would develop performance contracts with public colleges and universities.	Legislation requested by Governor Locke (HB 2681 and SB 6332) was not approved by the Legislature. However, the supplemental operating budget permits the Governor to develop a "prototype" of a performance contract for a research university, with assistance from the HECB.

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Degree-Granting Institutions Act	The HECB administers the law under which out-of-state colleges are authorized to operate in Washington.	The Legislature and Governor enacted HB 2381 to revise and update the Degree-Granting Institutions Act, including provisions to safeguard Washington consumers from “diploma mills.”
Transfer and articulation	The HECB supports improvements in the student transfer process as articulated in the board’s 2004 interim strategic master plan.	HB 2382 was enacted to improve the transfer system for students through three specific projects. The bill directs the HECB to convene work groups to 1) develop transfer degrees for specific academic majors; 2) develop a statewide system of course equivalency to help students transfer; and 3) conduct a ‘gap analysis’ of upper division capacity for transfer students at the public universities.
Financial aid fund management	HECB supports making maximum use of financial aid funds for their intended purposes.	For the third consecutive year, the House passed legislation (HB 1123) to establish a financial aid account in which unspent funds would be retained for the following year. In 2002, the Governor vetoed similar legislation following Senate passage, but the bill died in the Senate each of the last two years.
Future Teachers Conditional Scholarships and Loan Repayments	The HECB supports programs to recruit and retain public school teachers and has administered four such programs over the past 21 years.	HB 2708 was enacted to consolidate several existing future teachers conditional scholarship programs. The measure also added a loan repayment option for current teachers. The bill will make available about \$440,000 that has accumulated in accounts whose use is restricted under current law.
Branch campuses	In its 2004 interim strategic master plan, the HECB calls for branch campuses to offer selected lower-division courses and-or evolve into four-year universities as appropriate in each region.	The Legislature and Governor enacted HB 2707 to reaffirm the mission of the branch campuses as upper division and graduate education centers, and to permit the campuses to plan their future development. Among other provisions, the bill authorizes the campuses to make recommendations to the HECB by Nov. 15, 2004, regarding their future evolution. The HECB is to add policy options to the institutions’ recommendations in a report to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2005.

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<p>UW Bothell-Cascadia merger</p> <p>UW Bothell and WSU Vancouver lower-division courses</p>	<p>In its 2004 interim strategic master plan, the HECB calls for branch campuses to offer selected lower-division courses and-or evolve into four-year universities as appropriate in each region.</p>	<p>Legislation calling for the merger of the UW Bothell branch campus and the co-located Cascadia Community College (HB 2843) was not approved. The Governor, citing the broader planning provisions of HB 2707, vetoed budget language that would have directed the UW Bothell and WSU Vancouver to plan to begin offering lower-division courses.</p>
<p>Affirmative action in college admissions</p>	<p>The HECB supports the limited use of affirmative action criteria in student admissions policies</p>	<p>Neither the House nor Senate passed Governor Locke's legislation (HB 2700 and SB 6268) to allow four-year universities to maintain a diverse student population by considering race, ethnicity, or national origin in admitting students, without using quotas, set-asides or point values for affirmative action considerations.</p>
<p>Remedial instruction for recent high school graduates</p>	<p>The HECB is committed to reducing the number of recent high school graduates who require remedial instruction when they enroll in college.</p>	<p>Lawmakers enacted SB 5139, directing K-12 and higher education agencies, including the HECB, to take actions to reduce the need for remedial instruction among recent high school graduates. The organizations are to submit a report by December 15, 2004, outlining actions taken by schools and colleges and recommendations for further improvement.</p>